discussed and the outcome of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) panel meeting held in Geneva recently ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : It is presumed that the question pertains to the consultations resumed by the Committee on Balance of Payments Restrictions of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) with India at Geneva on 20.21 January 1997.

During these consultations, the Committee took note of the positive developments in India's economic situation since 1995. The Committee welcomed the Indian authorities' continued commitment to economic reform and liberalisation and noted India's progressive removal of quantitative restrictions notified under Article XVIII : B of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994. The Committee agreed to resume the consultations in the week beginning 2 June 1997. The purpose of the consultations would be to consider a plan, which the Committee invited India to present to eliminate the measures notified under Article XVIII : B and to conclude the consultations consistently with all relevant balance of payments provisions. It was noted by the Committee that in drawing up its plan, India will give due consideration to the interests of WTO Members in a balanced manner.

[Translation]

Loans for Co-operative Spinning Mills

4411. SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of co-operative spinning mills in the country which are proposed to be provided financial assistance through Central Financial Institutions in the form of long-term loans; and

(b) the time likely to be taken by the financial institutions for sanctioning long-term loans to co-operative spinning mills ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) and (b) The Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) has reported that in view of the large incidence of defaults by co-operative spinning mills to financial institutions (FIs), FIs have taken a decision that application for financial assistance for new co-operative spinning mills could be considered only after dues in respect of existing co-operative spinning mills are cleared by the units or respective State Governments who have guaranteed the loans.

IDBI has further reported that except Maharashtra, no other State has approached FIs for assistance to set up co-operative spinning mills. The Government of Maharashtra had advised the IDBI that 56 co-operative spinning mills would be set up in the State of Maharashtra during Eighth plan period. Of these, 14 have so far approached IDBI and 20 have approached Industrial Finance Corporation of India Ltd. (IFCI) for assistance. No assistance has been sanctioned by FIs so far, as it was felt by them that there was no scope for such a large capacity. In view of greater emphasis on exports, FIs have been giving preference to export oriented units promoted by persons with experience in the line and envisaging installation of most modern equipment to ensure production of yarn of international standard. The working of the existing co-operative mills has been generally unsatisfactory and they have large overdues of FIs. IDBI has advised the Government of Maharashtra to clear the overdues of existing co-operative spinning mills and strengthen their organisational set up.

[English]

Export and production of Cashew

4412. SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO
DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the production and export of cashew during each of the last three years;

(b) whether the cashew growers and exporters have been demanding more incentive to increase the production of cashew;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government have received any request to extend the (OGL) facility to the cashew exporters;

(e) if so, the reaction of the Government in this regard; and

(f) the steps taken to increase the production and to promote the export of cashew during 1997-98 ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) The production and export of cashew during each of the last three years have been as under :-

Year	Production of raw cashewnut (Metric Tons)* (Estimates)	Export of Cashew Kernels***	
		Quantity in Metric Tons	Value in Rs. Crores
1994-95	3,48,150	69832	1045.31
1994-95	3,21,640	76900	1241.97
1995-96	4,17,830	97792	1231.07

(Source :

Directorate of Cashew Development, Cochin

**DGCI&S, Calcutta.)

(b) to (f) The domestic production of raw cashewnuts is inadequate to meet the requirements of the processing industry and in response to the demand from the industry to increase the production, various development schemes have been sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture. Further, import of raw cashewnuts is freely allowed without any restrictions. The programmes on new plantation development and replanting of old and senile plants with clones of high yielding varieties, implemented during the Eighth Five Year Plan will be extended in 1997-98 alongwith adequate resources for transfer of technology to the farmers through training, demonstration and aid literatures etc.

Export of cashew if freely allowed without any restrictions. The steps taken to increase exports of cashew include : participation in international fairs abroad; arranging buyer-seller meets; publicity campaigns in the overseas markets and dissimination of information on quality requirements of the overseas buyers to Indian exporters.

Trade Agreement with South African Countries

4413. SHRI V. PRADEEP DEV : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the bilateral trade between India and South Africa has been growing at an extremely impressive rate since the lifting of the sanctions against the South Africa in the year 1993;

(b) if so, the value of the trade between these two countries during each of the last three years, till date;

(c) whether any trade agreement has been signed between India and South Africa during the visit of Deputy President of South Africa; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Year-wise details of trade between India and South Africa for the years 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97 (till Dec. 1996) are given below :-

(Rs./Crores)

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97 (Till Dec. 1996)
Export	500.08	1113.71	892.18
Import	494.81	811.79	765.65

(Source : DGCI&S Calcutta)

(c) and (d) A Trade Agreement between India and South Africa was signed on 22nd Aug., 1994 at Johannesburg. The Agreement provides for grant of Most Favoured Nation status by each country to the other in all matters of import and export licences, customs duties and all other charges and taxes applicable to importation and exportation and transit of goods as well as grant of all advantages, favours, privileges/immunities.

Trade Tie-up with China and Russia

4414 SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Confederation of Indian Industry has suggested that efforts between India, Russia and China can evolve a powerful econmic axis;

(b) if so, whether the Confederation of Indian Industry has called for constituting a High Power Working Group consisting of representatives of the Government and Industry to look into the prospects of cooperation and identification of modalities;

(c) if so, whether the Government have accepted the suggestion made by the Confederation of the Industry;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) to what extent the Government have agreed to have China, Russia and India Trade tie-up ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b) No formal proposal from confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in the matter has been received by the Ministry of Commerce.

(c) to (e) Does not arise.